

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the present application, and this Amendment and Response is the Applicant's reply to the USPTO Office Action having a mailing date of March 14, 2006. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-7, 14-17, and 23-25. The Examiner also objected to Claims 9-13, and 18-22. The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's recognition of the allowable subject matter of the objected claims. We note to the Examiner's attention that Claim 8 was not identified as either rejected, objected to, or allowed; however, as discussed further below, the Applicant has addressed Claim 8 herein.

With regard to rejected Claims 1-7, 14-17 and 23-25, the Examiner has rejected these claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,123,629 to Takeuchi (hereafter "Takeuchi"). In particular, the Examiner contends that Takeuchi discloses an adjustable clamp having an elongated connection member (4), first and second gears (5 and 7), a first clamp (18), and a rotatable sleeve (10).

As noted above, the Examiner did not refer to Claim 8 in the Office Action. Nonetheless, the Applicant has reviewed Claim 8 in view of the Examiner's comments in Paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action of the Office Action with regard to the newly cited prior art document Takeuchi. Claim 8 further limits the rejected Claim 1 by the feature that "the first gear member is located in a bracket integral with the first clamp member". Claim 8 thus defines embodiments of the present invention in which the driven gear member is held within the first clamp member, such as the embodiment 600 shown in Figure 6a of the present application, wherein worm gear 651 is located within a bracket 654 that is integrally formed with first clamp member 630.

The Examiner's reasoning in relation to Takeuchi indicates that the Examiner considers that the supporting table 18 of the jack disclosed in Takeuchi corresponds with the first clamp member defined in Claim 1 of the present application. However, the Takeuchi jack includes bevel gears 5 and 7, which the Examiner also contends correspond with the first and second gear members of the present invention. Without the Applicant necessarily agreeing with the Examiner's interpretation of Takeuchi, it is apparent that, consistent with the Examiner's reasoning, Takeuchi does not disclose either of the gear members 5 and 7 being located in a bracket integral with the supporting table 18, as would be required for Takeuchi to anticipate the subject matter of present Claim 8. Accordingly, the Applicant asserts that Claim 8 is therefore allowable, in view of the Examiner's rejection of Claim 1, if rewritten in proper form. Therefore, the Applicant has rewritten Claim 8 in independent form. As such, the Applicant respectfully requests the allowance of Claim 8, as amended. In addition, the Applicant has added Claim 34 to depend from Claim 8. Given the allowability of Claim 8, dependent Claim 34 should also be allowable as well.

With regard to objected Claims 9-13, the Applicant has rewritten Claim 9 in independent form. In addition, Claims 14-17 have been amended to depend ultimately from Claim 9. Furthermore, the Applicant has cancelled Claims 2-7 and added identical Claims 28-33, with the exception that new Claims 28-33 depend ultimately from Claim 9. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection of Claim 9 and allow Claim 9 along with its dependent claims, namely, Claims 10-17 and 28-33.

With regard to objected Claims 18-22, the Applicant has rewritten Claims 18 and 19 in independent form. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection of Claims 18-22.

Finally, with regard to rejected Claims 23-25, it is noted to the Examiner's attention that these claims relate to an engagement assembly, comprising a gear arrangement integrated with a first clamp member, as a component separate from the connecting rod and second clamp member. As an example embodiment, such an engagement assembly is comprised by the clamp member 630, the gear assembly 650 (that is, gears 651, 652), and the sleeve member 656 of the embodiment 600 illustrated in Figures 6a and 6b. The Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 23 to 25 are not anticipated by Takeuchi. As indicated above, the engagement assembly defined in independent Claim 23 includes a rotatable sleeve member, a clamp member and a gear assembly, and it is intended for use as part of an adjustable clamp assembly including a threaded connecting rod, but it does itself not include the connecting rod. The Examiner has identified in Takeuchi a rotatable sleeve 10, a clamp member 18, and a gear assembly 5 and 7; however these do not comprise an engagement assembly having the structure defined in Claim 23. More particularly, the sleeve 10 and supporting table 18 of Takeuchi are part of a first unit, while the gear assembly 5 and 7 is part of a separate unit which includes the threaded connecting rod 4. The threaded rod 4 is thus an essential component of the Takeuchi jack assembly, without which there exist only two separate units, with no structural or functional interrelationship. It is thus apparent that there is no engagement assembly disclosed in Takeuchi that corresponds with the

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structure defined in independent Claim 23. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection of Claims 23-25.

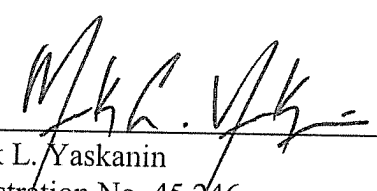
In summation, the Applicant has either amended the rejected claims or otherwise distinguished the claims over the cited prior art of Takeuchi. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to withdraw the rejection and objections of the Office Action dated March 14, 2006.

Based upon the foregoing, the Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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June 14, 2006

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